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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration

Washington, August 4, 1947
(For release August 5, P.M.)

This is the first in the series of material for use in connection with egg quality conservation which FMA and the State Offices and Extension Service have been asked to emphasize during the hot weather period.

USDA Calls for Egg Quality Conservation

The United States Department of Agriculture has asked the cooperation of producers, handlers and dealers in a Nation-wide move to conserve egg quality.

One of the major objectives of the plan is to make available to consumers a maximum proportion of quality eggs out of the production and supplies anticipated for the last five months of 1947.

U. S. consumers used record quantities of eggs during the war, and for the postwar period so far consumption has remained far above the prewar level.

With the prospect for somewhat smaller supplies of eggs in the fall and winter months, consumer demand for eggs may not be fully satisfied at reasonable prices unless steps are taken toward quality preservation.

Consumer interest in eggs centers inevitably on quality. Deterioration in eggs, as in many other perishable foods, starts immediately after they have been produced. It is possible through proper handling throughout the marketing system to retard quality deterioration, and so make available for consumers a far greater number of high quality eggs than would be available otherwise.

The following paragraphs give details on the egg quality conservation program:

USDA poultry experts point out that quality conservation must begin at the farm. Facilities and management to obtain eggs with clean shells and frequent collection of eggs from the nests are the most important initial steps the producer can take in protecting the original quality of the eggs produced by his laying flock.

Collections should be made at least three times each day. Less frequent collection delays the proper cooling of eggs and frequently results in a partly cooled egg being left in the nest to be rewarmed by other hens using the same nest.

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Good poultry husbandry practices require that eggs be collected in wire baskets -- never in pails, boxes or woven baskets. Wire baskets permit the circulation of fresh air around every egg. The baskets should be placed immediately in a cool moist place for at least 24 hours before the eggs are packed. Department experts point out that many poultrymen do not realize how quickly a few degrees of heat affect eggs. Tests have shown that freshly laid eggs held at 90 degrees lose as much quality in 20 hours as eggs held for 3 days at 70 degrees, or for 24 days at 50 degrees. High temperatures and dryness affect egg quality and consumer acceptability. They rarely affect the nutritional value of eggs. Careful grading and labeling of eggs according to quality are important when eggs are intended for sale to consumers.

Producers who sell eggs by grade find that it pays to collect eggs frequently, cool them as soon as possible, and hold them under proper storage conditions.

Eggs soon deteriorate if left where it is too warm and dry. The water in the eggs evaporates, the air cell enlarges, the white becomes thin, and the yolk enlarges and weakens. A humidity of 85 to 90 percent is desirable when eggs are to be stored for any length of time. When the moisture content of the air is less than this average, steps should be taken to supply more moisture. One practical and effective method for use on farms is the hanging of wet burlap in rooms in which eggs are stored. If the storage room floor is too damp, the cases should be placed on boards or bricks.

To maintain top quality, eggs should be kept under refrigeration from the time they are gathered until they are ready for consumption. If refrigeration is not available, a house cellar or an outdoor cellar may provide cool storage space for eggs. Eggs should be held in a temperature range of 32 to 60 degrees F.; the lower the temperature within these limits the better the eggs will keep. If such temperatures are not available on the farm, eggs should be marketed more frequently.

Eggs absorb odors quickly. Consequently, they should not be kept in a musty place or where there are strong odors such as those of onions, lemons, or kerosene.

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Production and Marketing Administration

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CURRENT STATUS RECORD

Washington, August 1947

★ APR 29 1949

This is the second in the series of material for use in connection with egg ~~quality~~ ^{marketing} conservation which FMA and the State Offices and Extension Service have been asked to emphasize during the hot weather period.

Frequent Marketing Aids Egg Quality Conservation

Quality conservation in eggs, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, depends to a large extent upon frequent marketing. This practice, Department experts say, is important at all seasons of the year, but needs special emphasis in the hot weather months. Frequent marketing helps prevent rapid deterioration especially in eggs which cannot be held under proper conditions on the farm or at receiving stations.

High temperatures and dryness are enemies of egg quality. The facilities to give eggs ample protection against such conditions are frequently not available on the average farm where egg production represents only a part of general farming operations. Consequently, the farmer who does not have proper storage facilities should deliver his eggs to receiving stations as often as possible if he would avoid quality deterioration. The added inconvenience of more frequent marketing, Department experts maintain, is generally offset by the better prices the farmer can obtain for high quality eggs.

Receiving station operators who hold eggs for long periods under unfavorable conditions reduce returns to producers and cut their own profits by placing more and more low grade eggs in market channels. Unless receiving stations are well equipped to hold eggs for long periods, those that are graded, cased, and otherwise made ready for shipment, should be shipped as frequently as possible to the next receiver in the marketing system.

Wholesalers and retailers who buy graded eggs, as many do, are on the alert at this season for "hot-weather eggs." They pay less for such eggs and frequently

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offer premium prices for high quality kinds. Once "hot-weather eggs" reach retail channels, they serve to build up consumer resistance because of their poor quality rather than to encourage consumption because of their lower price. This is the season when many consumers who appreciate high-quality eggs will comb the market and pay high prices for top quality. There are many other consumers who are likely to avoid buying eggs at this time of year because of the inferior quality of the hot-weather variety and the high price of quality eggs.

Frequent marketing and good care of eggs from the farm through the marketing system help to place before the consumer eggs of a quality that will encourage maximum consumption.

It is as necessary to avoid quality loss in eggs in retail stores as it is in any other link in the marketing system. Eggs should be kept under refrigeration at all times. This includes eggs in individual cartons as well as those which are held in the original cases. Temperature and moisture conditions in the average retail store, summer and winter, are usually much too unfavorable to permit the piling of eggs in a back storage room or on counters without risking considerable quality loss. It is the ultimate consumer who is disappointed when he pays for top quality, grade labeled eggs and finds they do not measure up to that standard. To the storekeeper, such experience may mean the loss of customers, and to the farmer a loss of demand for his eggs.

In order to hold his customers, the retail dealer should (1) know the quality of the eggs he receives from the wholesaler, and see that they are labeled in accordance with that quality, and (2) insure quality conservation by keeping the eggs cold and away from foods with strong odors.

The consumer is the last link in the chain of quality conservers. To prevent deterioration in the home, the consumer should store eggs in a covered container in a cold place from the time they are purchased until they are used.

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Washington, August 1947

This is the third release in the series of material for use in connection with egg quality conservation which PMA and the State Offices and Extension Service have been asked to emphasize during the hot weather period.

Keeping Eggs Clean Helps to Conserve Quality

Poultry husbandry practices which assure the production of a maximum of clean, marketable eggs are highly important steps in conserving egg quality, according to U. S. Department of Agriculture experts. Dirty or soiled eggs present an unfavorable appearance to buyers throughout the marketing system and particularly to ultimate consumers. Such eggs are likely to spoil very quickly unless proper methods are used in cleaning them and frequently they are the basic cause of spoilage among clean eggs. Consequently, Department experts assure producers that it is easier and less costly to employ measures of prevention than it is to clean eggs once they have become soiled.

Despite every reasonable precaution, however, weather and other conditions beyond the producer's control, frequently cause eggs to become dirty or soiled ^{result} with the that the producer must clean them to make them marketable.

Experts declare that no dirty or stained eggs should ever leave the farm. Such eggs are carriers of bacteria which spread to clean eggs. Also, their unattractive appearance detracts from the price the farmer receives for clean eggs. Eggs that are unusually dirty should be utilized on the farm and should not be cleaned until they are to be used. Then the shells can be washed immediately before the egg is broken with the use of any suitable cleaning agent. Washing eggs removes the exterior "bloom" from the shell. This makes it possible for bacteria to penetrate the shell and damage the interior quality of washed eggs which are kept for extended periods.

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For this reason, egg buyers insist that market eggs which are to be stored should never be washed. Those that are only slightly soiled can be cleaned more easily with steel wool, fine sandpaper or emery cloth placed on a sheepskin shoe-brush. A damp cloth dabbed in washing soda or household scouring powder will frequently accomplish the same purpose.

The whole problem of clean eggs, however, is one of prevention rather than of cures. Prevention means constant attention to possible causes and taking steps to eliminate or correct them. Among the common causes of dirty eggs are wet or muddy ranges, unclean floors in henhouses, infrequent change of litter on henhouse floors, unclean or insufficient nests, and overcrowding of hen houses. All of these are causes which may be kept under control.

Confining hens each day until noon at least before the eggs are gathered usually answers the problem of dirty eggs which result from wet or muddy ranges. Wire cloth having a 2-inch mesh, fixed under perches and over dropping boards, will prevent hens from carrying filth to the nests. The use of clean, dry litter and frequent renewal of the litter answers the problem of keeping henhouse floors clean. Overcrowding of henhouses can be avoided by allowing at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 square feet of floor space for each hen and at least one nest for every five hens.

The problem of dirty or soiled eggs is large one for the producer to solve. Department experts point out that the producer is the one who benefits most from his efforts to market clean eggs and who loses most by marketing unclean eggs. The usual price spread between clean and dirty eggs is the best indication of the advantage to the producer who keeps them clean and marketable.

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Washington, August 1947

This is the fourth of the series of material for use in connection with egg quality conservation which PMA and the State Offices and Extension Service have been asked to emphasize during the hot weather period.

Candling Assures Consumers of Better Eggs:

Candling eggs to determine their interior condition is the surest way of making certain that only good, edible kinds reach consumers. U. S. Department of Agriculture experts say that egg candling is one phase of egg marketing which particularly demands the close attention of producers, handlers and dealers who sell direct to consumers.

"Candling" an egg consists of holding it before a light so that the light rays illuminate the interior. Experienced candlers explain that in the process, "the better the egg, the less you see before the light."

Egg candling equipment is neither expensive to buy nor difficult to make. A 40 to 60 watt electric bulb supplies all the light necessary. If a reflector is used a 10 - 15 watt bulb is usually adequate. Because candling must be done in a dark room the light must be enclosed in a box or other suitable container, having a 1 1/8 to 1 1/4-inch hole in one side. The opening should be placed sufficiently below the bulb filament to prevent the reflection of light in the candler's eyes.

Candlers hold the eggs in a slanting position with the large end up and against the light opening. One or two quick turns on the long axis of the egg suffice to set the egg contents in motion, thus permitting careful examination.

Department grading experts point out that not all newly laid eggs will qualify for the highest grade. Consequently, producers should always candle the eggs they intend to sell direct to consumers. Eggs that are sold by producers to commercial handlers should always be candled and graded at some point in the marketing system before they reach consumers.

Candling is the only practical commercial process by which low quality eggs can be detected in the shell. It reveals blood spots, so-called "meat" spots, development of the germ spot in fertile eggs, blood rings, yolks that are stuck to the shell and other defects which make an egg objectionable or inedible. Such eggs build up consumer resistance. They can spoil a breakfast or a cake in preparation and for these reasons they should never be allowed to reach consumers. Candling need not be complicated and tedious. With practice, speed and efficiency can be obtained and will be of definite benefit to the majority of producers and handlers.

Candling to determine interior quality is a large part of the entire egg grading process. It reveals 4 of the 5 primary factors which indicate quality in eggs. These factors are: the size of the air cell, the condition of the yolk, the condition of the white, and the extent of the development of the germ spot. The fifth factor is shell condition which may be determined without candling.

Other factors in the grading process are shell color, size uniformity, and weight. Shell color frequently affects price, but never affects interior quality. Size uniformity and weight always affects the price. Preference for white or brown eggs varies between markets. On some markets white eggs bring a premium price and on others brown eggs are preferred. But, expert graders say that it is always best to separate eggs according to color, for the sake of their better appearance to the prospective buyer, no matter where they are to be sold. Separating and packing according to size also helps sell eggs for the same reasons.

In many markets, weight is one of the most important factors. Official grades usually specify minimum net weights of eggs by the case or by the dozen. Scales for weighing individual eggs are reasonable in price and will pay for themselves in a short time.

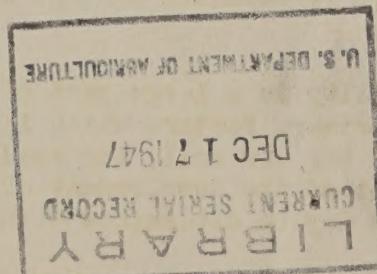
Consideration of all of the factors -- primary and secondary -- determines the quality of an individual egg and the grade and weight class in which it should be placed. Official U. S. Standards of quality for individual shell eggs, for example, include four qualities -- AA, A, B, and C, with specifications for each quality.

In the Federal grading of eggs for commercial distribution in consumer channels these standards prevail in the four consumer grades under which eggs are packed in cartons or cases. The consumer grades, however, allow specified tolerances (for human error and normal drop in quality). In actual practice a pack of Grade AA eggs, for example, must contain at least 80 percent of grade AA eggs and may include up to 15 percent of Grade A or better and not more than 5 percent may be of a quality below A. This Grade cannot include dirty eggs. Grade A requirements call for 80 percent of the pack in this Grade, with up to 15 percent of Grade B or better and not more than 5 percent of eggs grading below B. Tolerances for consumer Grade B eggs require at least 80 percent of Grade B and allow 10 percent of C Grade or Stained and not more than 10 percent of Dirty or Stained eggs in any combination. For Consumer Grade C at least 80 percent must be of C quality or Stained, in any combination, or better and the remainder may be Dirty or Checks in any combination.

Size or Weight Class	Ounces, average Per Dozen	Pounds Per Case
Jumbo	28	52
Extra large	26	48 $\frac{1}{2}$
Large	24	45
Medium	21	40
Small	18	34

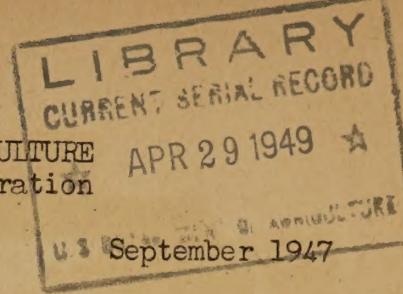
NOTE: Egg quality and weight standards in many states are based upon U. S. Specifications. You may wish to check with the proper local authorities for regulations prevailing in your State.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration



This is the fifth of the series of material for use in connection with egg quality conservation which PMA and the State Offices and Extension Service have been asked to emphasize during the hot weather period.

Consumers Can Get More for Their Egg Money

Homemakers and hotel and institutional managers should consider egg quality, size, and shell color in relation to price when they buy eggs. These steps, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, will help the buyer obtain the most for his egg money.

The grade label under which eggs are sold is the consumer's guide to quality. It is good practice to check on the quality by noting the "broken-out appearance" of the eggs as they are used. Grade AA and A eggs that have been kept cool from the time they were graded will have a firm white and an upstanding yolk. These high-quality eggs are especially desirable for poaching, frying, and cooking in the shell. Grade B and Grade C eggs, having thinner, more spread-out whites and flatter yolks, are entirely satisfactory for many cooking purposes. For scrambling and for use in baking, Grade B eggs are just as satisfactory as Grade A eggs, and should cost less. These facts on buying and using eggs according to grade apply whether the eggs are large or small, and whether their shells are white or brown.

During the next few weeks, late summer and early fall, substantial savings can be made in buying eggs by noting the relative values in different sizes and grades. Supplies of high quality, large eggs are always short at this season. The demand of many consumers for large eggs, coupled with the short supply, usually results in making the price high as compared with prices for smaller eggs of equal quality. Meanwhile, small and medium-size eggs reach a seasonal peak in supply, as many pullets begin laying in the late summer. Consumers who choose the smaller-size eggs can profit by unusually good buys when these conditions prevail. Within the same grade, there is often a wide spread between the retail prices of small, medium, and large size.

The smaller eggs within a grade have the same food value as the larger eggs, allowing for the difference in weight. Medium eggs weigh about $12\frac{1}{2}\%$, or $1/8$, less than large eggs, and small eggs weigh approximately 25% , or $\frac{1}{4}$, less than large eggs.

The following table of price and value comparisons will help consumers take advantage of good buys in high-quality eggs:

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Comparative Values in Grade A Eggs, Based on Weight

When Large Grade A Eggs (minimum weight 24 oz. per dozen) cost	Medium-sized Grade A Eggs (minimum weight 21 oz. per dozen) are as good or a better value at	And Small Grade A Eggs (minimum weight 18 oz. per dozen) are as good or a better value at
51 - 55	45 - 48	38 - 41
56 - 60	49 - 52	42 - 45
61 - 65	53 - 57	46 - 49
66 - 70	58 - 61	50 - 52
71 - 75	62 - 66	53 - 56
76 - 80	67 - 70	57 - 60
81 - 85	71 - 74	61 - 64
86 - 90	75 - 79	65 - 68

Consumers may well make a similar comparison of the prices of Grade B eggs of different sizes, as Grade B eggs also are priced according to weight per dozen.

The spread in price between eggs of the same size but of different grades is also worth noting. As an example, retail prices of large Grade eggs are often quoted as much as 10 to 15 cents below the price of large Grade A.

In some markets, consumer preference for shell color also affects price. For instance, in many cities, brown eggs sell at substantially lower prices than white eggs of the same grade and size. In other cities, white eggs bring the lower prices. This fact is worth noting as the color of the shell does not affect the food value or the interior quality of the egg.

Size and shell color can not be changed by the dealer or the consumer. Quality, or characteristics of freshness, may, however, change materially. Consumers and dealers alike, regardless of the quality of eggs they are buying or selling, should make sure that the quality they receive is maintained by storing eggs in a refrigerator free from odors. Eggs should be refrigerated in a covered container to keep the evaporation of moisture at a minimum.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration

Washington, September 1947

APR 29 1949

This is the sixth of the series of material for use in connection with egg quality conservation which PMA and the State Offices and Extension Service have been asked to emphasize during the hot weather period.

When You Buy Eggs

When you buy eggs, you are buying one of Nature's prize foods. Eggs are high in food value and fine in flavor. They have so many uses that they can easily find their place in any meal of the day every day of the year.

Like many other good foods, eggs require care to retain the high quality they have when produced. The shell that covers the edible part of the egg is itself a protection to quality. But the shell is porous. Warm temperatures and strong flavors and odors can penetrate the pores of the egg shell. The quality that's in an egg when the hen lays it can be retained only by good care that begins at once.

The poultry farmer, as well as every person who deals in the egg business, either on a wholesale or retail scale, has a responsibility for getting eggs to you, the consumer, in fine condition. Gathering eggs frequently, cooling them immediately, and keeping them cool in a clean place free from odors are important steps in maintaining egg quality.

The grade label on the egg carton is your best guide to quality in the eggs you buy. Eggs that are officially graded according to U. S. standards carry a label that tells the quality (or grade) and the date of grading. Learn the meaning of the grade label, and check to see that the eggs you buy measure up to the standards for the grade you pay for.

If you're not sure of the eggs you buy, it's good practice to check on quality by noting the "broken-out appearance" of an egg or two just as soon as you get home with a new lot of eggs. AA and A grade eggs have a large proportion of firm white, standing up well around the yolk. The yolk itself is round and upstanding. Eggs of lower quality, just as good for many uses, have a smaller proportion of thick white, or no thick white at all. When broken out, the egg white covers a large area; it spreads out thinly. The yolk is less round, and it may break easily. These differences in quality between eggs in AA and A grades and those in B and C grades do not affect food value. They do make some difference in the use you make of eggs, and they should make considerable difference in the price you pay for eggs. The higher quality, more expensive eggs with their firm white and upstanding yolk are especially desirable for poaching, frying, and cooking in the shell. If you choose high quality eggs, just be sure you have inside the shell the quality you have paid for.

And at that point, take over the responsibility for giving good care to a good food. Whatever the quality of eggs when purchased, it can deteriorate rapidly in hot weather any place -- in a warm kitchen just as much as in a warm nest, a warm truck, or a warm store.

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Three points on the "kitchen care" of eggs to maintain their quality apply equally to the home, the hotel, and the institutional kitchen. They are worth noting and putting into practice:

(1) Don't wash eggs until just before they are used. The dull velvety "bloom" on the egg shell is a protective film. It helps to prevent bacteria and odors from getting through the porous shell. If there are soiled spots on any of the eggs, these spots should be wiped off with a rough, dry cloth.

(2) Speed eggs to a refrigerator or other cold place without delay and store them in a covered container. Both dryness and warmth cause loss of moisture and other undesirable changes. Experiments have shown that an egg kept at ordinary room temperature 3 days loses as much freshness as an egg kept in a home refrigerator for 2 weeks.

(3) Protect eggs from absorbing off-flavors. Covering eggs in the refrigerator to prevent loss of moisture helps to keep out strong flavors. It's wise also to store strong-smelling foods in tightly covered containers.

Homemakers who buy eggs in quantity to save making extra trips to the store, and managers of hotels, restaurants, and institutions who always buy on a wholesale scale, should take special note of the above points because such users are likely to store eggs longer than the average consumer.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration

September 1947

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CURRENT SERIAL RECORD

This is the seventh of the series of releases for use in connection with egg quality conservation — a subject 9 1949 which PMA area and the State Offices and Extension Service have been asked to emphasize during the hot weather period.

U. S. AGRICULTURE

Proper Packing Methods Help to Conserve Egg Quality

Proper packing methods are a necessary part of the whole plan of quality conservation in eggs from the time they are produced until they are consumed. According to U. S. Department of Agriculture experts, careless or improper packing of eggs is frequently responsible for heavy quality loss as well as loss through damage to the eggs. All the precautions taken to preserve quality up to the time the eggs are packed amount to little if this final step is not properly taken.

The first requirement is the use of good containers. Egg cases may be of wood or fiber and they may be new or used. They must, however, be sound, well fastened on all sides and fitted with clean, dry flats and fillers of a satisfactory type. Fiber cases that show obvious signs of damage through handling or exposure to moisture should not be used except as temporary containers. Wooden cases, unless they are new, should be examined carefully to make certain that they are in good enough condition to stand handling. Cartons in which eggs are to be packed for the retail trade should always be new.

Keeping eggs loose in baskets, boxes, or crates for extended periods on the farm, at receiving stations, or in stores where the eggs are being sold at retail, is a practice that leads to rapid quality deterioration. An egg should never be kept for any length of time unless it is placed with the big end up, in a suitable container. The packing of eggs in any other position, as in bulk in baskets, boxes, or crates, or even in regulation containers, leads to displacement of the yolk and rapid loss of quality. Eggs with displaced yolks must be graded B or C. They are never Grade AA or A. Incidentally, experts point out that an egg packed upside down (small end up) when it is warm will lose quality three times as fast as a properly packed egg. The air cell in an egg is always at the large end. This cell permits an egg to "breathe"; when the egg is packed big end down it literally smothers.

Proper packing of eggs demands that the pack be reasonably tight so that the eggs will not be cracked or broken in the cases. Breakage, of course, can also occur when eggs are packed too tightly. The whole purpose of packing eggs in cases or cartons is for the sake of convenience in handling and to prevent breakage in handling the eggs throughout the marketing system.

The purpose of flats and fillers is to provide packing material around each egg to keep it from actual contact with the other eggs and, therefore, to prevent damage or breakage. The cup-type flats now in popular use make excellent cushions for the eggs, top and bottom, as they are packed in a standard case. Fillers which fit over and under the flats keep the eggs from shifting out of position.

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Cases are made to specified standards which accommodate eggs of "average" size. Consequently, when very large or very long eggs are packed, it is frequently necessary to use extra-deep fillers and to deepen the cases by nailing on inch strips of wood to the top of each case -- a strip at each end and one at the partition in the center of the case. The additional space thus provided helps materially in reducing damage from end crushing.

The whole problem of proper packing and handling of eggs is of vast importance to the industry in helping to conserve egg quality and in preventing waste through damage and breakage. Detailed information as to the steps that producers, truckers, handlers, and shippers should take in packing eggs is contained in a publication "Reducing Damage to Eggs and Egg Cases" (MP No. 564) which may be obtained from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

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Production and Marketing Administration

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CURRENT SPECIAL RECORDS
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This is the eighth of the series of releases for use in connection with egg quality conservation — a subject which PMA area and State Offices and the Extension Service have been asked to emphasize during the hot-weather period.

Egg Quality Conservation is Retailers' Responsibility

Quality conservation of eggs to assure consumer acceptability at all times is as much the responsibility of retailers as it is of producers and other handlers. U. S. Department of Agriculture experts on egg-handling methods and practices point out that the efforts made by producers, wholesalers, and other handlers throughout the marketing system count for little if retailers fail to do their part. The retailer is the last link between the producer and the consumer. He can materially help to conserve egg quality and serve his patrons and the producer if he incorporates good quality conservation methods in his merchandising practices.

Selling eggs in cartons only and keeping them under refrigeration from the time they reach the store until they are sold to consumers are the two major principles of quality conservation and good merchandising of eggs in retail stores. Keeping and selling eggs in bulk should be discouraged. Quality deterioration is rapid when eggs are displayed on store counters or on floors in baskets, boxes, or other unsuitable containers. This is particularly true when temperatures and moisture conditions are unfavorable.

For those storekeepers who buy eggs in large quantities, it is good practice to keep the reserve supply in the standard cases in which the eggs were received until they are packaged in cartons for sale to consumers. Many storekeepers now buy eggs already packed in cartons. Egg stocks, however, whether they are packed in cases or in cartons, should always be kept under refrigeration. Egg displays should be planned so that the eggs ready for sale can be kept in refrigerator showcases, in locations readily accessible to patrons. For display purposes the use of empty egg cartons is as effective as the use of filled and closed cartons. Open counter displays used frequently when eggs are a "featured item" should be avoided because eggs are perishable. Refrigerated showcases offer the best means of display. Merchandising practices which serve the storekeeper, the producer, and the consumer best are those which keep eggs properly for the full length of time they are in the store. This means taking ordinary precautions to make certain that eggs are properly packed and held constantly, either in stock or on display, under suitable temperatures — 32° to not over 50° F.

Retaining high quality depends upon the temperature and humidity at which eggs are held. For example, storekeepers and consumers should know that even infertile eggs of AA quality can drop to Grade C quality in 3 days if held at a temperature of 98.6° F. Many display counters, storerooms, kitchens, and pantries provide a temperature of 90° F. or higher during the summer months. Egg quality is retained much longer at the lower temperatures provided by the store or the home refrigerator.

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Furthermore, it is of much importance for the storekeeper to make certain that the eggs he sells to his patrons represent the quality indicated by the label or stamp on the egg cartons. Consumers are learning to buy eggs, as well as other commodities, by grade. They know that top-grade eggs should be suitable for poaching, cooking in the shell, or frying. Patrons who are disappointed when they find that the eggs they buy do not represent the quality they are paying for, either seek a source of better quality eggs or reduce their consumption of eggs. Neither is good business for the storekeeper who loses his customers. If consumers get so discouraged about lack of quality that they buy fewer eggs for even a short time, it hurts the producers and wholesalers as well as the retailers. It is important, too, that retailers keep no more eggs on hand than they can handle properly with the facilities they have.

In assuming their responsibility for conserving egg quality, retailers should remember that they pay for quality in the eggs they handle. It pays them to maintain that quality in selling to the consumer.